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Psychological Health by Moral Commitment

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Abstract

Moral value and moral commitment has a significant role in human life. The role of moral value in human life is a point made by world religions and philosophers. One of considerable point regarding the role and function of moral value comes in term of psychological function and achievement. The aim in this paper is to deal with the psychological role and function fulfilled by moral commitment. According to religious teachings psychological aspect of human life has connection with moral commitment. The writers attempt to display how moral values and commitment could be concluded to psychological health. The discussions in present research are confined to general understanding of moral values in all world religions but mostly the references are limited to Islamic teachings.

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1. Introduction

There is no doubt that many things are required for human life and the lack of which produce disorder and malfunction in man`s behavioral. Human needs in general could be categorized two sorts: first the bodily needs and requirements which directly have bearing on the body of man and the second one the mental requirements and needs which directly affect the soul and non - bodily behavioral. Of course this categorization presupposes, in some extent, a particular kind of ideology regarding the creation and nature of man. Psychological disorder and unwanted conditions are recognized as a kind of sickness to be cured both in the traditional history of human culture and most considerably since modern era for modern scholars. Wars, fights and such events are not the only problems that man could face. The events such as the feeling of despair, loneliness, depression and so on are currently the most affecting disease and considerable problem for contemporary man. Man by nature dislikes the feeling of despair, loneliness and from the beginning he seeks for psychological peace and hope for his life without which man does not consider his life useful and pleasant. The aim in this paper is to deal with ethical values and how its commitment by man as act-doer could lead to psychological coherency and well-order. The writers attempt to display that man`s life requirement is not confined to biological needs and elements. Explanation is given how moral values are regarded as particular sort of requirement in human life and how its failure disturb seriously man`s life turn it in dissatisfied form. Moral values are given status parallel to other requirements such as bodily needs in human life, so enough attention has to be paid to the weight of man`s commitment regarding moral values. Islamic references and emphasis is displayed concerning psychological function of moral commitment.

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2. Psychological disorder

Mental disorder has a long history in human life. A number of mental disorders, such as melancholy, hysteria and phobia, were described long ago in Ancient Greece and Rome while others such as schizophrenia may not have been recognized (Evans, 2003, p. 107). Hippocrates considered the idea that mental illness may be related to biology (Stong 2005, p.5). Psychiatric theories and treatments for mental illness developed in Islamic medicine in the Middle East, notably from the 8th century at the Baghdad Hospital under the physician Rhazes. Medieval Europe had focused on demonic possession as the explanation of aberrant behavior (Kroll, 1984, p.507). Paracelsus used the word lunatic to describe behavior thought to be caused by the lunar effect (Delgado, 2000, p.33). What exactly is a psychological disorder? How is a psychological disorder diagnosed? A psychological disorder, also known as a mental disorder, is a pattern of behavioral or psychological symptoms that impact multiple life areas and/or create distress for the person experiencing these symptoms. In other word, Mental disorder or mental illness are terms used to refer a psychological or physiological pattern that occurs in an individual and is usually associated with distress or disability that is not expected as part of normal development or culture. Meanwhile mental health (*Kaplan*, 1980, p.3339) can be defined as a state of emotional wellbeing in which a person is able to function comfortable within his society and in which his personal achievements and characteristics are satisfactory to him. Emotional disorders are defined as disturbance of behavior and affect which results in disturbance of a person's function in society. During the last few decades it is becoming more and clearer that biological, social and psychological factors influence the human behavior and that the health disturbing factors operate within the individual, within the group and within the social system in which he functions. In certain forms of emotional disorders we see predominant biological factors and in others psychosocial factors. Abnormality is difficult to define and it varies from particular perspective to another one and from culture to culture. While psychological disorders, in general, are characterized by some form of abnormality Psychologists have several standard approaches to defining abnormality for diagnostic purposes. One is the statistical approach, which evaluates behavior by determining how closely it conforms to or deviates from that of the majority of people. Behavior may also be evaluated by whether it conforms to social rules and cultural norms, an approach that avoids condemning nonconformists as abnormal for behavior that, while unusual, may not violate social standards and may even be valued in their culture. Yet another way to ascertain the normality of behavior is to what extent it interferes with the conduct of everyday life. In some situations, psychologists may also evaluate normality solely on the basis of whether or not a person is made unhappy or uncomfortable by his or her own behavior.² It is worthy to note that relatively recent research has revealed that psychological disorders are far more prevalent than previously believed. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), approximately 26 percent of American adults over the age of 18 suffer from some type of diagnosable mental disorder in a given year (Kessler, 1994, p.8).

3. Psychological Disorder and Moral Commitment

Morality is viewed in Islamic perspective as a significant component for the meaning of human life. A man's Life without morality could not be seen as human normal life. In other word a life without values such as mutual respect and what is taught in moral makes human life worthless life. Even the divine prophet, Mohammad (pbuh) said: "my main mission is to evolve the moral values". Given this sort of ranking to the moral values in human life, the place of ethical values and moral commitment would be evident in therapeutic practice. It means that the search for the cause and sources of sickness is not limited to biological failure. Ethical disorder and the lack of moral commitment are considered as the cause and source of some sort of disorder in human life.

God says about Quran: It (Quran) is a guide and a healing to those who believe" (S.41: V. 44). Religion plays a significant role in satisfying our physical as well as spiritual needs. Islam teaches us a code of behavior and gives us a meaning for our existence. When morality and moral commitment decline in a particular society, the emergence of psychological disorders is expected. When families are falling apart, divorce rate is increasing sharply, and

² The official standard for the classification of psychological disorders is the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, whose most recent edition is also referred to as DSM-IV.

substance abuse and excessive sexual indulgence are common in adolescents and young adults, the emergence of despair and hopelessness is evident. These factors lead to conflicts, resentment, and loss of self-respect, loneliness, depression, anxiety and a host of psychological symptoms. Despite progress in the behavioral sciences, there remains the question of whether current technique of treatment and prevention of emotional disturbances are effective in making a significant impact on psychiatric problems. According to the world religions such as Islamic teachings, the commitment of moral values makes and keeps human life safe. When man conform his conducts to moral values and ethical codes the sources of despair and depression in life become less and psychological disorder decline. Thus Islamic principles including moral values and its commitments which are based on Quran and Hadith are the best form of prevention and treatment of emotional disturbances and psychological disorder. Muslims physicians and mental health professionals should incorporate the Islamic values and ethics in techniques of psychotherapy. God says about Quran IT (QURAN) IS A GUIDE AND A HEALING TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE (S.41: v. 44). God says in Quran about psychological and social diseases and cures in several verses.

There are many psychiatrists and psychotherapists discourage the use of any religious concept in treatment of emotionally disordered. Of course, Freudian theories have a great deal of influence on western thinking. Freud's focus on sex as the driving force of human behavior and repression of sexual desires as a cause of neurosis, made a considerable impact on medical and social scientists. Individuals are encouraged to express freely aggressive and sexual desires, which further contribute in changing the sexual attitudes and lack of inhibition in the society at large. Freud and his followers have tried to explain religion as the universal obsessional neurosis" (Freud, 1949) . It is prejudiced, irrational statement and many psychoanalysts contradict Freud's statement. Erich Fromm defines religion as: A system of thought and actions by a group which gives the individual a frame of orientation and an object of devotion"(Fromme,1950). Arieti elaborates further the role of religion in human life (Arieti , 1967). He states that religion gives people faith for survival of man and to achieve human ideals. Religion becomes an incentive to greatness of spirit. It offers new insight which opens up new dimensions of understanding and feeling. Higgins further supporting the importance of religion states that modern psychiatry has not yet significantly tapped the fund of information about the human condition ranging from the inspirational writing about the aims of living to highly systematized doctrine about organization of behavior (Higgins,1974).

Islam pays a significant attention in satisfying our physical needs and spiritual needs as well. Islam teaches us, a code of behavior, and conservation of social values and gives us a meaning for our existence. It helps in toleration and developing adaptive capacities for stressful events of life. It gives us a sense of self-respect and teaches us about the virtues of family life and a cohesive society with a sense of brotherhood. Muslim psychiatrists and psychotherapists should incorporate the Islamic values, ethics and code of behavior in techniques of psychotherapy.

Family is an important socio-cultural institution which makes a considerable impact on personality development and a potential factor in emotional disorders.

4. Concluding Remarks

Islamic teachings display distinctive feature concerning morality and point out that morality is a very significant component of the meaning of life and the main mission of divine prophets. Meanwhile the involvement of moral values is connected to man`s psychological health. The more one commit to moral values and follow ethical orders in practice, more one achieve health and balance in his psychological life.

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